

Business Plan

2016–2017

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development





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Message from the Minister



I am pleased to present the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Business Plan for 2016–17. Since the release of *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education* in January 2015, the department has identified and has begun implementation of over 100 actions and in 2016–17. We will build upon the progress that has been made with fundamental changes to our public education system. Working closely with teachers, we are striving to ensure that our students achieve better results, especially in math and literacy, and are better prepared to lead productive lives in our changing world.

The readiness of students to enter school and their successful graduation into a world of employment or post-secondary education are essential to advancing government's priorities.

Helping preschool children and their families meet key developmental milestones and prepare for school is a priority for the department. We will continue to expand access to Early Years Centres, and focus on collecting information to help parents/guardians keep track of their child's growth and development and direct them to appropriate supports, as necessary.

The department is committed to increased student achievement in math and literacy, and in 2016–17 we will continue to work with teachers to streamline a coordinated and innovative curriculum for grades 4, 5, and 6. We will also enhance assessment for literacy and math in grades primary to 3, monitoring students' progress to identify the need for early intervention.

With a focus on the success of all our students, the department will support inclusive education that takes into account individual student needs and provides flexible programming choices and options. Implementing this model will require a continuum of support to provide a broad range of programming options for students with special needs, as well as continued improvements to the Individual Program Plan, including clear eligibility criteria and implementation process.

The department has also made student transition and career-readiness a priority, working with our educators and other partners to help students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully to post-secondary institutions and/or the labour market. In 2016–17 we will begin implementation of the recommendations put forward by the Transition Task Force and work with the newly formed Business-Education Council to explore and create positive, productive career exploration opportunities and experiences for our children.

In the year ahead we will continue to work for students, families, teachers, school boards, and the community to support achievement for every student and address the current and emerging challenges, in order to build a better education system for all Nova Scotians.

Original signed by

Honourable Karen Casey
Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development

Department Mandate

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has a broad mandate that includes responsibility for early childhood development and the education of children and youth through the public school system.

The department's mandate is carried out through

- child, youth, and family-centered programs and services
- early learning and care programs for children from birth to school entry
- high-quality educational programs and student services in both of Canada's official languages
- strong assessment and evaluation services
- a focus on creating a more culturally-responsive and inclusive education system
- a progressive and responsive policy environment
- effective financial management, facilities planning, and comptrollership
- teacher education and certification
- effective opportunities for ongoing, high-quality professional learning for teachers and principals
- educational research and partnerships

Through the implementation of the Department's mandate, the following specific actions will be undertaken:

- improve outcomes in math and literacy
- maintain focus on investing in and improving the learning and teaching environment that benefits both teachers and students
- implement the Education Action Plan to modernize and improve the grades primary to 12 education system
- lead the creation of collective impact initiatives that bring together businesses, civil society organizations and engaged citizens to improve communities
- enhance guidance and student career counseling services
- place additional focus on math and science skills in grades primary to 12
- introduce coding as a foundational component of grade primary to 12 curriculums
- assess and plan for expiring P3 contracts through a comprehensive capital planning process
- continue to focus on early learning and care

Government Priorities

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has an important role to play in helping government work toward its identified priority areas (People, Innovation, and Education) in particular with respect to improving early childhood and P-12 education in Nova Scotia.

Government has committed to re-invest \$65 million into the Nova Scotia public education system over four years so that students, families, and educators get the support they need to excel in a rapidly changing world. This investment furthers the implementation of the initiatives outlined in *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education*, which align with the department's strategic outcomes and support government's overall objectives.

OUTCOME: SKILLED NOVA SCOTIANS DRIVE A KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION ECONOMY

Improve early childhood and P-12 education

In January 2015, the department released *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild* in response to the *Report of the Minister's Panel on Education*, which represented the views of over 19,000 Nova Scotians. Implementation of the Action Plan began immediately with over 100 actions spanning early childhood development (the years prior to starting school), elementary, middle/junior high, through to senior high school and the transition into post-secondary education and/or the workforce.

The Action Plan is structured around four pillars that reinforce a focus on student success in the province:

1. A modern education system
2. An innovative curriculum
3. Inclusive school environments
4. Excellence in teaching and leadership

As significant changes are being made to the curriculum to ensure students have a strong foundation in math and literacy, ongoing improvements to student assessment and evaluation is also a priority for the department.

Priority Initiatives

- 1.1 Continue a review of public school programs for grades primary to 12.
- 1.2 Implement a new literacy strategy for grades primary to 12.
- 1.3 Continue strengthening early literacy through increased Reading Recovery program support to provide students with strong instruction and support that is responsive to student needs.
- 1.4 Implement an updated math strategy for grades primary to 12.

- 1.5 Enhance assessment and intervention for math in grades primary to 3, with targeted funding for math mentors in these grades. Students' progress will be monitored at set intervals to identify any need for early intervention, with a common Mathematics Assessment completed for all students at the start of grade 2.
- 1.6 Implement pilot programs for the extension of grade 11 Academic Math.
- 1.7 Continue with the renewal of the curriculum with a focus on grades 4, 5, and 6 to make it more streamlined, coordinated, and innovative. This will result in a reduction in the number of outcomes, while ensuring teachers have high-quality resources and engaged professional learning for effective implementation in the classroom.
- 1.8 Implement the department's new Student Success Planning Model for school improvement.
- 1.9 Expand the number of Early Years Centre sites and continue to provide annual sustainable funding of \$125,000 per site to centres across the province with the goal of improving support, increasing access to programs, and improving outcomes for children.
- 1.10 Implement the recommendations following the regulated child care review to enhance the quality and accessibility of child care in Nova Scotia.
- 1.11 Develop and implement a student attendance policy.
- 1.12 Develop and implement a policy and supporting procedures for student assessment, evaluation, and reporting.
- 1.13 Use assessment results to improve learning in the classroom, with the department providing ongoing professional development in the use of assessments for teachers and school administrators.
- 1.14 Work with school boards on the continued implementation of a class-size cap initiative, with a focus on class sizes of 25 students for grades 5 and 6 to ensure class sizes support the best possible delivery of the public school program.
- 1.15 Implement a needs-based model of service delivery for inclusive education, which will support teaching and learning for all students. In 2016–17, the department will continue to provide grants to school boards to address the continuum of supports and complex needs of students.
- 1.16 Revamp the Individual Program Plan (IPP) process to increase parent/guardian participation and share the responsibility for the development of IPPs with classroom teachers, resource and Student Services staff, and other professionals.

- 1.17 Through partnership agreements, increase the number of post-secondary transition year programs towards meeting the goal of one per school board for graduating high school students with special needs.
- 1.18 Work with the Inter-University Network in Research for the Achievement Gap to support and share research into the achievement gap in Nova Scotia schools.
- 1.19 Develop and implement new teaching standards for teachers.
- 1.20 Develop new leadership standards for school administrators.

Performance Measures¹

Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing

The Nova Scotia Assessment for Reading and Writing is used to measure student learning and achievement in literacy for students in grades 3, 6, and 8. The target for this measure is to increase the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year.

Students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grades 6 and 8. French-language provincial assessments in reading and writing are administered to students in grades 3, 6, and 8 attending school in CSAP.

Assessment: Reading

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading			
	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13	76%	76%	70%
2013–14	70%	75%	74%
2014–15*	68%	74%	73%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13	—	76%	71%
2013–14	—	74%	76%
2014–15*	75%	69%	71%

*Note: 2014–15 is the revised baseline year for this performance measure in order to measure results against the implementation of initiatives through the Action Plan for Education.

— data not collected during this time frame

¹ The reporting years for assessment results reflect the school year.

Assessment: Writing

Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing			
	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15*
Grade 3			
Ideas	88%	88%	76%
Organization	80%	76%	60%
Language Use	83%	79%	64%
Conventions	71%	66%	53%
Grade 6			
Ideas	89%	88%	76%
Organization	81%	79%	61%
Language Use	82%	79%	66%
Conventions	73%	65%	58%
Grade 8			
Ideas	95%	86%	N/A**
Organization	88%	78%	
Language Use	89%	82%	
Conventions	80%	72%	
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
Year	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15*
Grade 3			
Ideas	---	---	65%
Organization	---	---	59%
Language Use	---	---	58%
Conventions	---	---	48%
Grade 6			
Ideas	88%	79%	71%
Organization	64%	64%	59%
Language Use	57%	59%	56%
Conventions	37%	50%	43%
Grade 8			
Ideas	86%	77%	N/A**
Organization	76%	71%	
Language Use	68%	69%	
Conventions	50%	60%	

*Note: 2014-15 is the revised baseline year for this performance measure in order to measure results against the implementation of initiatives through the Action Plan for Education.

** results not yet available

— data not collected during this time frame

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10

This examination is used to measure student learning and achievement in literacy for students enrolled in English 10, with results contributing to the students' final grade.

Percentage of Students Meeting English 10 Expectations		
		2014–15*
Reading		76%
Writing	Ideas	67%
	Organization	61%
	Language Use	62%
	Conventions	61%

Note: The English 10 exam is administered annually in January or June of that school year. The 2015–16 results are not yet available.

*baseline

Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics

The Nova Scotia Assessment for Mathematics is used to measure student learning and achievement in math for students in grades 4, 6, and 8. The target for this measure is to increase the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year. The assessment for grades 6 and 8 were first administered in 2012–13 and the assessment for grade 4 was introduced in 2013–14.

Students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) do not participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Mathematics. Students in grades 4, 6, and 8 who attend schools in the CSAP participate in the Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: mathématiques.

Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics			
	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13	—	73%	54%
2013–14	74%	73%	57%
2014–15*	74%	69%	55%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : mathématiques (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13	—	—	65%
2013–14	75%	73%	67%
2014–15*	73%	65%	53%

* 2014–15 is the revised baseline year for this performance measure in order to measure result against the implementation of initiatives through the Action Plan for Education.

— data not collected during this time frame

Nova Scotia Examination: Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work

These examinations are used to measure a student's learning and achievement in math for the Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work courses, with results contributing to the student's final grade.

Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations	
	2014–15*
<i>Mathematics 10</i>	67%
<i>Mathematics at Work</i>	56%

*baseline

Note: The exam for Mathematics 10 is administered annually in June, and the exam for Mathematics at Work is administered in January or June of that school year. The 2015–16 results for these exams are not yet available.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results are used to measure 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science and allow for comparison across jurisdictions. The PISA assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy and mathematics. Each assessment includes questions from all three subject areas with a focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered. The major focus of the 2012 PISA assessment was mathematics. The target for this measure is an increase over the 2009 baseline data by the next reporting period.

PISA Results				
Subject	NS Average (2009)	NS Average (2012)	Canadian Average (2012)	OECD Average (2012)
Reading	516	508	523	496
Math	512	497	518	494
Science	523	516	525	501

*baseline

Note: Results for PISA 2015 are expected to be released in December 2016.

Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) results are used to measure student performance in reading, mathematics, and science in grade 8. The target for this measure is an increase over the 2007 baseline data by the next reporting period.

PCAP Results	2007 Results		2010 Results*		2013 Results	
Subject	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average
Reading	483	500	489	500	488	508
Math	N/A	N/A	474	500	488	507
Science	N/A	N/A	489	500	492	500

*adjusted baseline

Note: Administration of PCAP 2016 is anticipated for spring 2016, with results available in fall 2017.

OUTCOME: NOVA SCOTIA'S POPULATION IS GROWING, PRODUCTIVE, AND THRIVING

Enhance workforce participation of youth, older workers, and marginalized communities

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to working with its partners to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully through each stage of their education, and eventually to post-secondary institutions and/or the labour market. Recognizing that career readiness does not start in grade 12, the department will offer positive, productive career exploration opportunities and experiences for all students, encouraging hands-on learning opportunities so they can develop their creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills.

Priority Initiatives

- 2.1 Review and develop a plan with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education to address the recommendations from the Transition Task Force to support the successful transition of students to post-secondary education and/or career.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a new provincial transition planning guide to support consistent transition planning for students.
- 2.3 Work with the newly formed Business Education Council to explore and create positive and productive career exploration opportunities and experience for students. This includes engaging business, supporting teachers, and identifying initiatives and programs that will help students succeed during their P–12 education and upon graduation when they enter post-secondary or the workforce.
- 2.4 Explore opportunities for workplace training for graduating students.

- 2.5 Implement a new career education framework for students in grades 4 to 12.
- 2.6 Improve the curriculum through the development of grade 4 interest inventories and require all high school students to develop Individual Career Plans where they will receive information on opportunities for the exploration of STEAM careers.
- 2.7 Increase the availability of hands-on learning opportunities through the expansion of community-based learning programs for middle school students, such as Discovering Opportunities 9, which familiarizes students with career and education programs linked to trades, technology, and apprenticeship.
- 2.8 Implement a new coding strategy for grades primary to 12 that will provide all students with an introduction to the basics of coding, which is an essential skill directly linked to many of the growth industries in Nova Scotia (e.g., computer programming, marine manufacturing, and communications).

Enhance health and wellness outcomes

Recognizing that the health and wellness of students play a significant role in their ability to learn, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development works with other departments, agencies, and organizations that provide supports to students, to ensure they have timely access to a wide range of services that support mental and physical well-being.

Priority Initiatives

- 3.1 Develop a system to register all children in an electronic school file at birth. This information will help parents/guardians keep track of their child's growth and development and may also be used by the education system to help plan services like preschool screenings and transition plans.
- 3.2 In collaboration with the Department of Health and Wellness, develop a multi-year implementation plan for new preschool screening for children at 18 and 36 months of age, and six months before starting school. Results from these screenings will be used to direct parents/guardians to information and appropriate support services, as necessary.
- 3.3 Encourage and find more opportunities to increase physical activity throughout the day.
- 3.4 Continue to implement curriculum components that address social and emotional learning across grade levels.
- 3.5 Continue to support students with special needs through targeted funding for guidance counsellors to ensure the recommended counsellor-to-student ratio of 1:500 is maintained.
- 3.6 Continue to provide targeted funding for programs and services for children and youth requiring intensive support due to their complex needs.

Improve communities and social well-being

In addition to academic and teaching excellence, the department is committed to ensuring students are ready to succeed in whatever they choose to do after graduation and that they become valuable, contributing members of their community. Programs, services, and educational opportunities will focus on developing skills, strategies, and self-confidence to prepare students to compete on the international stage.

Priority Initiatives

- 4.1 Improve the coordination of services for children in SchoolsPlus and Early Years Centres.
- 4.2 Create clear and uniform mechanisms for information sharing and communication across agencies.
- 4.3 Continue to fund school boards through the Student Support Grant to allow schools to tailor services and programming at a local level to improve student success and off-set fundraising pressures many parents/guardians and schools face.
- 4.4 Introduce a Character Development course starting in elementary school to teach personal qualities such as empathy, honesty, respect, accountability, and responsibility.
- 4.5 Create a 21st Century Citizenship course at the grade 10 level as a requirement for graduation that will focus on civics, Canadian government, personal financial management, volunteerism, media and digital literacy, and service learning.
- 4.6 Focus on promoting cultural awareness and equity for all students through the curriculum, learning resources, and direct teaching.

Performance Measures²

Early Childhood Development Intervention Wait List

Early Childhood Development Intervention Services delivers services for young children diagnosed with, or at risk for, developmental delay. The services are designed to help both the child and the family from the time the child is born to when they enter school. Leading up to 2015–16, more than 300 families were waiting for services. These families now have access and are benefitting from the services. The target for this measure is to maintain the waitlist at zero, with new families seeking services being seen within one month of being referred.

Number of Children on Waitlist (Early Childhood Development Intervention)			
	2013–14*	2014–15	2015–16
# of children	336	332	No waitlist

*baseline

² The reporting years for the Early Development Instrument data, Early Interventions data, and graduation rates reflect the school year.

The Early Development Instrument

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a teacher-completed questionnaire, collected every two years across the province that measures a child's development in five core areas that are reliable predictors of adult health, education, and social outcomes. Schools, school boards, and community partners can use this data to identify vulnerable populations of children, and mobilize resources to support young children and their families where it is most needed. The target is to reduce the percentage of children vulnerable in each of the EDI domains by 2016–17.

Percentage of Children Vulnerable in EDI Domains		
	2012–13*	2014–15
Physical Health and Well-Being	10.3%	9.8%
Social Competence	9.9%	9.1%
Emotional maturity	9.7%	9.0%
Language and Cognitive Development	10.4%	10.8%
Communication Skills and General Knowledge	10.7%	10.6%
At least one domain	25.5%	25.5%

Note: Data is collected every two years.

*baseline (Note: The 2012–13 baseline percentages were originally calculated using the national cut-point³, which is largely populated by children living in Ontario and British Columbia. A cut-point specific to Nova Scotia results has been used to re-calculate the EDI results to more accurately report on, and track, the province's EDI results).

High School Graduation Rate

The high school graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students in grade 9 three years earlier. The target for this measure is to continue to increase the graduation rate over the 2009–10 baseline by 2016–17.

High School Graduation Rate					
2009–10*	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
86.1%	88.7%	88.6%	89.6%	89.8%	92.5%

*baseline

OUTCOME: NOVA SCOTIA HAS A STRONG AND GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE ECONOMY AND A SUSTAINABLE, MODERN GOVERNMENT

Create the climate for private-sector and social-enterprise economic growth to support the OneNS economic goals

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to strengthening the connection between business and education, with a focus on student preparedness for life after high school.

³ Cut-points are the value that marks the boundary for the lowest 10th percentile in the distribution. For 2012–13, cut-points specific to the Nova Scotia distribution were used to create a Nova Scotia baseline. Ongoing reporting of EDI results will use this method.

The department recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship as well as the value of entrepreneurial attributes such as innovation, creativity, problem-solving skills, initiative, and teamwork, which can all be applied to any career path a student may choose.

Priority Initiatives

- 5.1 Provide students in grades 4 to 8 with hands-on learning activities through computer programming, creative arts, science labs, and collective impact projects.
- 5.2 Provide students in middle school access to a range of innovative, experiential, and entrepreneurial learning opportunities (e.g., expansion of Brilliant Labs across the province).
- 5.3 Continue to expand community-based learning programs for high school students, including Co-op Education, Options and Opportunities (O₂), and Skilled Trades.
- 5.4 Expand the delivery of Junior Achievement in all school boards, providing hands-on experiential learning in the classroom and through extracurricular activities.
- 5.5 Add Entrepreneurship 12 to the eligible courses for Challenge for Credit and/or Independent Study in the Public School Program.
- 5.6 Create a Minister's Award of Excellence for Entrepreneurship to encourage entrepreneurship among high school students and recognize students who successfully start their own businesses.

Performance Measures

The performance measure for this outcome consists of the number of students participating in each of the community-based learning programs offered throughout the province. These programs place students with community hosts/employers to explore career interests, discover the skills required for success in the workplace, and recognize the connections between their school-based learning and community/ workplace, all of which contribute to increasing student engagement. The target for this measure is to increase the number of students who have access to community-based learning programs over the next two years.

Initiative	Number of students participating		
	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Co-op Education	2,988	3,032	3,437
Options and Opportunities	2,320	2,540	2,669
Skilled Trades	681	983	1,328

Core Responsibilities/Services

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is responsible for ensuring children from birth to school entry, and their families, have increased access to comprehensive, integrated, and culturally responsive early learning and care programs, supports and resources. The department supports healthy early childhood growth and development and improved outcomes for every child through development of an integrated early years system across Nova Scotia.

The department is also responsible for the oversight of the education of children and youth through the public school system, overseeing all programs and courses of the Public School Program, grades primary to 12, and related professional learning. This includes managing the implementation of national official languages programs for the province, and providing leadership for student support programs and services that pertain to Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian learners, and those related to students with special needs.

In addition to promoting excellence in teaching, leadership, and research, the department distributes public education funding through the use of a funding allocation model and working closely with senior staff at the school board level.

Departmental Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2015–2016</u> <u>Estimate</u>	<u>2015–2016</u> <u>Forecast</u>	<u>2016–2017</u> <u>Estimate</u>
Senior Management	2,169	2,683	2,679
Strategic Policy and Research	2,716	2,408	2,684
Early Years	58,788	58,576	65,796
Centre for Learning Excellence	4,261	4,206	4,547
Education Innovation Programs and Services	18,177	16,896	14,837
Student Equity and Support Services	11,067	10,721	11,306
French Programs and Services	10,491	11,338	10,318
Corporate Services	9,533	8,027	4,894
Public Education Funding	978,973	978,803	1,001,693
Credit Allocation	6,813	7,052	7,313
Teachers' Pension	69,428	72,554	81,751
School Capital - Amortization	72,191	72,190	71,714
Total Departmental Expenses	1,244,607	1,245,454	1,279,532
 Ordinary Recoveries	 13,100	 14,048	 13,922
 Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	211.8	185.0	200.8
 Note: For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1			